

Celebrating
60
years

**Barnet Local Plan
Examination
Response to Matter 8: Design,
Tall Buildings and Heritage**

St William Homes LLP

6 September 2022

LICHFIELDS

LICHFIELDS

Lichfields is the pre-eminent planning and development consultancy in the UK

**Celebrating 60 years
of innovation in planning.**

lichfields.uk

© 2022 Nathaniel Lichfield & Partners Limited (trading as "Lichfields"), All Rights Reserved, is registered in England, no. 2778116.
Registered office at The Minster Building, 21 Mincing Lane, London EC3R 7AG.
Formatted for double sided printing.
Plans based upon Ordnance Survey mapping with the permission of Her Majesty's Stationery Office.
© Crown Copyright reserved. Licence number 10007707
15979/01/SSL/ITL
25783370v1

Contents

1.0	Introduction	1
2.0	Response to Inspector's Questions	2

1.0 Introduction

- 1.1 This statement to Matter 8 (Design, Tall Buildings and Heritage) of the examination of the Barnet Local Plan ('the Plan') is submitted by Lichfields on behalf of St William Homes LLP ('St William'). It follows the submission of representations to the Regulation 19 Draft Local Plan (June-August 2021).
- 1.2 St William have an interest in the former gas holder site located 21 Albert Rd, New Barnet, EN4 9SH, highlighted in the draft plan as New Barnet Gasholder Site No 21. The site is a redundant brownfield Gasworks site and in line with the NPPF is suitable and available for housing delivery, helping to meet the Council's housing growth objectives.
- 1.3 The National Planning Policy Framework ('NPPF') outlines that during the examination process a Local Plan must demonstrate that it has been positively prepared, is justified, is effective and is consistent with national policy. Outlined below are responses to a select number of the Inspector's questions which set out why we consider changes to Barnet Local Plan are necessary to ensure the soundness of the Plan.
- 1.4 The Council has prepared a schedule of proposed minor modifications that it wishes to make to the Plan. Reference is therefore made to the policies and paragraphs within the Plan version incorporating the schedule of minor modifications, unless otherwise stated.

2.0 Response to Inspector's Questions

Question 1: Policy CDH01 seeks to promote high quality design; is it positively prepared, justified, effective, consistent with national policy and in general conformity with Policies D2 to D6 of the London Plan in that respect?

- 2.1 Part (a) of Policy CDH01 seeks to ensure that residential proposals are developed at an optimum density to make the most efficient use of land. St William fully support this approach which is consistent with the London Plan (2021) policy D3 and the NPPF.
- 2.2 Part (b) sets out criteria that the Council will expect development proposals to conform to. Three minor amendments to these criteria are requested to ensure that the policy is sound by being effective and consistent with London-wide and national policy, set out below.
- 2.3 Part (i) sets out how developments should relate to their surroundings. Paragraph 130(c) of the NPPF states that, although planning policies should ensure developments are sympathetic to local character and history, they should not prevent or discourage appropriate innovation or change. In order to be effective and ensure consistency with national policy, the following amendment to (i) is proposed:
- i. *Respond ~~sensitively~~ positively to the distinctive local character and design, building form, patterns of development, scale, massing, roof form and height of the existing context by identifying the special and valued features and characteristics that are unique to the locality.*
- 2.4 The word 'positively' is more appropriate than 'sensitively' to ensure appropriate new forms of development are acceptable and that innovation, change and growth is not discouraged. This would also respond to the paragraphs 2.03 and 4.1.3 of the London Plan that state respectively (underlining is our emphasis):
- 'If London is to meet the challenges of the future, all parts of London will need to embrace and manage change. Not all change will be transformative – in many places, change will occur incrementally. This is especially the case in outer London, where the suburban pattern of development has significant potential for appropriate intensification over time, particularly for additional housing'; and*
- 'The Mayor recognises that development of this scale will require not just an increase in the number of homes approved but also a fundamental transformation in how new homes are delivered*
- and also reflects the statement in 2.3.2 of the draft Local Plan that confirms that
- 'Character can also evolve over time in a positive way with good growth from developments large and small'.*
- 2.5 Further, paragraph 2.3.4 of the draft Local Plan states that 'Effective planning will seek to maximise the opportunities that the Borough has to offer, including its town centres and areas of growth, open space and connectivity'. This approach is supported by the London Plan Policy SD6 which states that the vitality and viability of London's varied town centres should be promoted and enhanced by '*identifying locations for mixed-use or housing-led*

intensification to optimise residential growth potential, securing a high-quality environment and complementing local character and heritage assets.'

- 2.6 In this context, the policy should also reflect the policy guidance in Policy D3 of the London Plan that specifically states that developments should respond to the existing character of a place *'by identifying the special and valued features and characteristics that are unique to the locality'*.
- 2.7 Part (v) of the policy refers to the space standards set out in the London Plan (Policy D6). Paragraph 16(d) of the NPPF emphasises that plans should avoid unnecessary duplication of policies, as such, **part (v) should be removed** from the policy as developments in the borough will already need to comply with the space standards set out in the London Plan. Table 9 is a duplication of Table 3.1 of the London Plan.
- 2.8 Part (vi) on sunlight/daylight should more closely reflect Policy D6 of the London Plan by **adding** *'... that is appropriate for its context'*.

Question 4: Policy CDH04 seeks to provide an approach to tall buildings in strategic locations, is it positively prepared, justified, effective, consistent with national policy and in general conformity with the London Plan in those respects?

- 2.9 Supporting text to Policy CDH04 recognises that while the character of Barnet is predominantly suburban, over the plan period certain locations will evolve and change as the growth and regeneration objectives of the Council and the spatial strategy of the Plan is realised. Part of this will include taller and medium rise buildings which will play a key part in the delivery of new homes. The supporting text to CDH04 notes that tall buildings of exemplary architectural quality can make a positive contribution to their surroundings. Elsewhere (para 16.6.1) the Plan states that District Town Centres have identified developable and deliverable (opportunity) sites with substantial capacity for new homes, jobs and infrastructure. This is in conformity with the London Plan Objective GG2 which seeks to enable the development of brownfield land and prioritise sites well-connected by public transport, Policy SD6 which supports greater residential development in District Town Centres, and the NPPF paragraph 119 which seeks to make as much use as possible of brownfield land.
- 2.10 Whilst the opportunity for growth and homes delivery in sustainable and accessible town centres is recognised in the Plan, Policy CDH04 does not identify all District Town Centres and opportunity sites on the edge of those centres as being suitable locations for mid-rise development and potentially for tall buildings. This does not align, with the supporting text which suggests that there is 'substantial' capacity for new homes in these areas, the draft site allocations, which identify sites in and on the edge of District Town Centres as suitable for significant residential development, and policy CDH01 which advocates a design-led approach to determine site capacity taking into account the local context, site accessibility and the capacity of infrastructure. Policy D9 of the London Plan states that 'tall buildings should only be developed in locations that are identified as suitable in Development Plans', therefore, Policy CDH04 should identify all potential areas certainly where mid-rise buildings are appropriate and where taller buildings may be acceptable to ensure that the Plan does not restrict the development of tall buildings at locations where these may be suitable and sustainable.

- 2.11 The approach to the location of tall buildings set out in Policy CDH04 is inconsistent with the London Plan Policy H1 which seeks to optimise the potential for housing delivery on all suitable and available brownfield sites, especially those located within 800m distance of a station or town centre boundary and have PTAL levels 3-6. Policy SD6 of the London Plan supports and encourages greater residential development in Town Centres. In addition, paragraph 2.03 of the London Plan emphasises that in outer London, suburban patterns of development have significant potential for appropriate intensification. The omission of District Town Centres as suitable areas for tall buildings is not in conformity with the London Plan.
- 2.12 As recognised in the draft Local Plan, District Town Centres and opportunity sites on the edges will make a significant contribution to Barnet's housing requirement (5,240 homes in total as set out in Policy GSS01), and that these (alongside Growth Areas and the New Southgate Opportunity Area) are '*the most sustainable locations with good public transport connections and active travel provision*' (Policy BSS01). It is, therefore, inconsistent with the wider aims of the plan to restrict all development in District Town Centres to 7 storeys or less but, at the very least, it should be made clear that mid-rise development will be acceptable in such locations.
- 2.13 It is therefore important that all policies in the Local Plan support these aspirations and policy direction and allow the for scope for taller buildings within and on the edge of all District Town Centres.
- 2.14 By way of an example, the New Barnet Gasholder site meets these criteria – it is located approximately 520m from New Barnet train station and approximately 200m from the services and facilities of the town centre. The New Barnet Town Centre Framework 2010 (examination ref. EB_E_13) identifies the gas works site as part of the Victoria Quarter opportunity site with scope for a new residential-led mixed use quarter for New Barnet.
- 2.15 As stated in paragraph 6.18.1 of the draft Local Plan '*However, as the Borough changes over the next fifteen years certain locations will evolve a different local character as tall and medium rise buildings are expected to play a greater part in new development*' (the underlining is our emphasis). As such, there is the need and scope for the scale and character of District Town Centres and opportunity sites on the edge of the District Town Centres to be planned to evolve with a different scale and character from what was consider suitable and appropriate 10 years ago. Further, gas works sites are complex sites with unique constraints as well as significant abnormal costs (more so than with other brownfield sites) associated with the delivery of high quality, design-led placemaking. On former utility sites such as these, it is especially important to ensure that development capacity is optimised to ensure that a high quality, viable development can be delivered at the site.
- 2.16 Therefore, this sustainable, brownfield opportunity site should be identified as being appropriate for mid-rise development and also as a potential area suitable for tall buildings subject to design led approaches taken at the planning application stage; meaning that, any scheme coming forward will still be subject to other London and local policies which ensure that schemes are design-led and optimise the potential for housing delivery whilst ensuring design quality.

2.17

In order to make this policy effective and consistent with the London Plan, the Policy **should be amended** to state that: *‘District Town Centres, opportunity sites on the edge of District Centres and land within Town Centre Frameworks are suitable for mid-rise development and may also be a suitable location for tall buildings, subject to meeting other requirements of the Plan e.g. the requirements of Policy CDH01 and part (e) of Policy CDH04’*. This will ensure that a design-led approach to optimising the capacity of new developments in and on the edge of District Town Centres can be achieved, and that the most appropriate form of development in these areas is delivered, thereby ensuring that District Town Centres’ substantial contribution to Barnet’s housing requirement can be realised.

Celebrating
60
years

Birmingham

0121 713 1530

birmingham@lichfields.uk

Edinburgh

0131 285 0670

edinburgh@lichfields.uk

Manchester

0161 837 6130

manchester@lichfields.uk

Bristol

0117 403 1980

bristol@lichfields.uk

Leeds

0113 397 1397

leeds@lichfields.uk

Newcastle

0191 261 5685

newcastle@lichfields.uk

Cardiff

029 2043 5880

cardiff@lichfields.uk

London

020 7837 4477

london@lichfields.uk

Thames Valley

0118 334 1920

thamesvalley@lichfields.uk



@LichfieldsUK

lichfields.uk